

HOUSE BILL REPORT

ESSB 5599

As Reported by House Committee On: Health Care

Title: An act relating to funding a central resource center for the nursing work force.

Brief Description: Providing for a central resource center for the nursing work force.

Sponsors: Senate Committee on Health & Long-Term Care (originally sponsored by Senators Franklin, Kastama, Thibaudeau, Benson, Kline and McAuliffe).

Brief History:

Committee Activity:

Health Care: 3/29/05, 3/31/05 [DPA].

Brief Summary of Engrossed Substitute Bill (As Amended by House Committee)

- Creates the Nursing Resource Center Account through a \$5 surcharge on certain nursing licenses to fund activities to collect and distribute data about the nursing workforce and to serve as a central resource for issues related to the nursing profession.

HOUSE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH CARE

Majority Report: Do pass as amended. Signed by 13 members: Representatives Cody, Chair; Campbell, Vice Chair; Morrell, Vice Chair; Bailey, Ranking Minority Member; Curtis, Assistant Ranking Minority Member; Alexander, Appleton, Clibborn, Green, Hinkle, Lantz, Moeller and Schual-Berke.

Staff: Chris Blake (786-7392).

Background:

The Nursing Care Quality Assurance Commission (Commission) regulates advanced registered nurse practitioners, licensed practical nurses, registered nurses, and nursing technicians. The Commission also has some responsibilities over nursing assistants. There are approximately 136,000 of these health care professionals credentialed in Washington.

In 2002, the Workforce Training and Education Coordinating Board (Board) convened a task force to examine the extent of the shortage of trained health care providers in Washington and to develop recommendations to increase the supply of providers. The task force's 2002 report

to the Legislature cited that hospital registered nurse vacancy rates were 9.2 percent statewide in 2001 and that there is potential for a more severe shortage as the population ages.

Summary of Amended Bill:

The "Nursing Resource Center Account" (Account) is created. The Account is to be funded through a \$5 surcharge added to the license fee for registered nurses and licensed practical nurses. The Department of Health (Department), in consultation with the Commission and the Board, shall award grants from the Account to a nonprofit organization that is led by nurses and coordinates with representatives of different nursing organizations. The organization shall use the funds to:

- maintain data on the current supply and demand of nurses in Washington;
- monitor trends in the applicant pool for nursing programs;
- form partnerships to promote diversity, career mobility, and leadership development within the nursing profession;
- evaluate the effectiveness of nursing programs to increase the access to nursing education and enhance career mobility;
- provide consultation and information related to state and national nursing resources;
- promote strategies to improve patient safety and patient care; and
- promote careers in nursing.

The Account is a non-appropriated account and the Secretary of Health (Secretary) may authorize expenditures. The organization may not use any funds from the Account for administrative costs, lobbying, or activities not specifically listed. The Secretary may be reimbursed for the reasonable costs of collecting and distributing the surcharge. The Secretary may also adopt rules to implement the Account.

The Department must review the program by June 30, 2012. The program will expire on June 30, 2013.

Amended Bill Compared to Engrossed Substitute Bill:

The amended bill removes the authority of the nursing resource center to conduct additional activities as agreed upon with the Department. It specifies that money from the Account may not be used for lobbying and it changes a reference to a duty to promote initiatives for patient safety to promoting strategies for patient safety. It also requires the Department review the nursing resource center program by June 30, 2012, and it repeals the program by 2013.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Preliminary fiscal note available.

Effective Date of Amended Bill: The bill takes effect 90 days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Testimony For: This bill will create a repository of information to address the needs of the nursing profession and to attract more nurses in light of the impending shortage of nurses. The other 24 states that have similar resource centers that are already in place are doing well.

Testimony Against: None.

Persons Testifying: Senator Franklin, prime sponsor; and Anne Tan Piazza, Washington State Nurses Association.

Persons Signed In To Testify But Not Testifying: None.